

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----211654Z 026027 /41

O R 211613Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1761
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 04645

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO DEFENSE FOR SECRETARY BROWN
AND ASD/ISA

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UK, NATO, OCON, MILI
SUBJECT: NATO AEW - SECDEF LETTER TO MULLEY

REF: A) STATE 61976
B) STATE 61945
C) LONDON 4513 (NOTAL)

1. WE DELIVERED SECDEF LETTER TO MULLEY THIS MORNING.
HE WAS OUT AND FACER (PRIVATE SECRETARY) (PLEASE PRO-
TECT FULLY) SAID MULLEY WOULD SEE IT IMMEDIATELY AFTER
RETURN FROM LUNCHEON ENGAGEMENT. HE THOUGHT IT LIKELY
A REPLY WILL BE SENT TOMORROW AS MULLEY THINKS
IT IS IMPORTANT SECDEF KNOW WHAT UK POSITION FOR 25
MARCH MEETING WILL BE.

2. FACER. TALKING TO POL-MIL ATTACHE, SAID WHILE HE
COULD NOT SPEAK CATEGORICALLY FOR MULLEY BEFORE MULLEY
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ACTUALLY SAW THE LETTER, HE KNOWS MULLEY WISHED TO MAKE
A NUMBER OF POINTS IN CONTINUATION OF MARCH 18 DIS-
CUSSION (REFTEL C).

3. THE POINTS ARE THESE: (A) THE UK NATO AEW PROBLEM
IS NOT ONLY POLITICAL BUT ALSO MILITARY AND FINANCIAL;
(B) IT BECOMES ESSENTIALLY "POLITICAL" IF THE 25

MARCH DEADLINE IS PASSED WITHOUT A SPECIFIC NATO COMMITMENT; (C) IT IS MILITARY IN THAT THE AGED SHACKLETONS SIMPLY CANNOT WITHSTAND REPLACEMENT DELAY ANY FURTHER. IT IS MOD'S VIEW THAT THIS COMPELLING ASPECT OF THE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENT IS DRIVING THE TIMING SITUATION AND THAT THIS IS NOT FULLY APPRECIATED IN WASHINGTON; (D) THE FINANCIAL PROBLEM PRIMARILY CENTERS ON THE GROWING COST OF KEEPING TWO OPTIONS OPEN -- UK DARE NOT CANCEL NIMROD UNTIL OUTCOME OF NATO AWACS IS KNOWN FOR CERTAIN.

4. FACER SAID MOD APPRECIATES SECDEF'S LETTER AS WELL AS THE POINTS WE MADE DRAWING ON REFTELS A AND B. AN ASPECT WHICH CAME IMMEDIATELY TO HIS MIND IS THAT SECDEF LETTER DOES NOT ADDRESS ISSUE OF A "FIRM TIMETABLE" FOR COMMITMENT TO THE PROGRAM. HE SAID IF SETTLEMENT OF THAT "DETAIL DRAGS ON" RAF WOULD BE IN VERY REAL TROUBLE WITH THEIR SHACKLETONS WHICH, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, MUST BE REPLACED SOONEST. FACER SAID MULLEY WILL WANT TO GET "A VERY GOOD FIX" ON WHAT SORT OF TIMETABLE WE HAVE IN MIND FOR AWACS ACTUALLY "GETTING THERE." HE NOTED MAY DPC TARGET WITHOUT COMMENT.

5. CONCERNING PARA 6 OF SECDEF LETTER, FACER SAID MULLEY WILL WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT HE HAS IN HAND ALREADY "A CABINET ENDORSEMENT IN PRINCIPLE" FOR UK PARTICIPATION IN NATO AEW. MULLEY HAD TO SATISFY CABINET COLLEAGUES ON FOUR MAJOR POINTS: (A) ADEQUACY OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PERFORMANCE OF AWACS/NIMROD; (B) COST AND UK COST-SHARE IN A NATO AEW PROGRAM VERSUS A NATIONAL PROGRAM; (C) INDUSTRIAL PARTICIPATION; AND (D) TIMING OF DECISION (AND UK'S INABILITY TO KEEP TWO OPTIONS OPEN INDEFINITELY). ON THE ABOVE POINTS FACER SAID MULLEY DOES NOT HAVE TO GET CABINET ENDORSEMENT AGAIN IF HE CAN DELIVER AN AWACS GO AHEAD AS OUTCOME OF 25 MARCH MEETING. BUT IT IS ON THE TIMING ISSUE THAT MULLEY HAS A PROBLEM IF HE CANNOT MEET THE 25 MARCH DATE. IT IS THAT DANGER (AND THE EXPECTATION IN A NUMBER OF QUARTERS THAT THAT TARGET DATE CANNOT BE MET) WHICH IS CREATING MISCHIEF AND DIFFICULTY. ALSO, IT IS THE ONE ELEMENT WHICH COULD FORCE MULLEY BACK TO CABINET AGAIN AND HENCE AWAKEN WHAT AT PRESENT ARE SLEEPING DOGS.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DEFENSE.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 /026 W
-----230914Z 051768 /12

O R 211613Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1762
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 04645

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (LINE 1 PARA 7)

6. FACER SAID MULLEY ENDORSES THE QUADRIPARTITE
BREAKFAST SUGGESTION BUT WILL WANT TO HAVE A BILATERAL
WITH LEBER AS WELL AS SECDEF. VIS-A-VIS THE SITUATION
IN BONN. FACER'S COMMENT WAS THAT UK EMBASSY HAD HEARD
OF "THE SUBSTANTIAL" US OFFER WHICH WOULD REDUCE FRG'S
SHARE TO 26 PERCENT. HE SIAD BRITISH ARE HOPEFUL THIS
WILL BE PICKED UP QUICKLY BY GERMANS.

7. FINALLY, CONCERNING PARA 5 REFTEL A AND PARA 2 REF-
TEL B, BRITISH THINK OUR OFFER IS A SIGNIFICANT ONE.
ONLY ONE POINT IN REACTION EMERGED IMMEDIATELY: WHILE
BOP, INDUSTRIAL PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT BENEVITS
FROM AWACS MAY WELL OVER THE LONG HAUL EXCEED THE
PROPOSED NIMROD PROGRAM, IN BRITAIN'S CURRENT ECONOMIC
PLIGHT AND HIGH LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT, POLITICIANS (AS
DISTINCE FROM BUREAUCRATS) MUST LOOK AT THE IMMEDIATE
AND SHORT-TERM RAMIFICATIONS. HERE, MULLEY AND HIS
CABINET COLLEAGUES ARE OBLIGED TO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO
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WHAT THE TRADE UNIONS INSIST "IS RIGHT" FROM THE EMPLOYMENT VIEWPOINT. NIMROD CANCELLATION MEANS IMMEDIATE LAY-OFFS/REDUNDANCIES FOR SEVERAL THOUSAND WORKERS WHILE AWACS WILL NOT PRODUCE ANY UK JOBS FOR A LONG TIME.

8. PACER PROMISED TO KEEP U ABREAST OF DEVELOPMENTS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AWACS, AIR DEFENSE, WARNING SYSTEMS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, BRIEFING MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LONDON04645
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770096-0583
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770340/aaaabiq.tel
Line Count: 180
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 66bad4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 STATE 61976
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3050439
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATO AEW - SECDEF LETTER TO MULLEY
TAGS: OCON, MILI, UK, US, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/66bad4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009